



EVIDENCE-BASED PEER SUPPORT STRATEGIES:

PROMOTING INCLUSION, LEARNING, AND RELATIONSHIPS
USING PEER SUPPORT STRATEGIES

ERIK CARTER | VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

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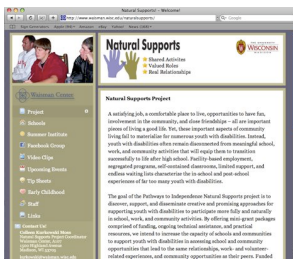
AN OVERVIEW...

- ☐ INTRODUCTIONS
- ☐ RIGOR AND RELATIONSHIPS
- ☐ REFLECTING ON YOUR SCHOOL
- ☐ PEER SUPPORT STRATEGIES
- ☐ BEYOND THE CLASSROOM
- ☐ EVALUATING OUTCOMES
- ☐ DISCUSSION



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FOR MORE INFORMATION...



[WWW.WAISMAN.WISC.EDU/
NATURALSUPPORTS](http://WWW.WAISMAN.WISC.EDU/NATURALSUPPORTS)

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RIGOR



RELEVANCE



RELATIONSHIPS

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Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004)

(5) Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by—
(A) having high expectations for such children and ensuring their access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom, to the maximum extent possible, in order to—
(i) meet developmental goals and, to the maximum extent possible, the challenging expectations that have been established for all children; and
(ii) be prepared to lead productive and independent adult lives, to the maximum extent possible;

Rigor

Relationships

Relevance



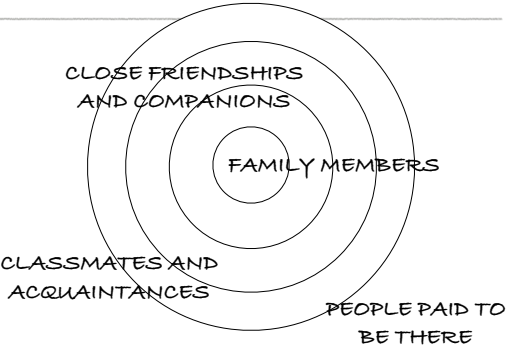
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SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER...

- Where are the **rigorous** and **relevant** learning opportunities in your schools or community?
- What opportunities do students have to develop valued **relationships** with their peers?
- What **supports** would help students with significant disabilities benefit most from these opportunities?
- Are there **new opportunities** that should be developed or existing ones that should be expanded?

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THE RELATIONSHIPS WE HAVE...



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WHY RELATIONSHIPS MATTER...
FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- ☐ COMPANIONSHIP AND SENSE OF BELONGING
- ☐ EMOTIONAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT
- ☐ PEER NORMS AND VALUES (ROLE MODELS)
- ☐ LEARNING NEW SKILLS
- ☐ IMPROVED SELF-ESTEEM
- ☐ INTELLECTUAL AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT
- ☐ DECREASED BEHAVIORAL CHALLENGES
- ☐ INCREASED SCHOOL AND WORK ATTENDANCE
- ☐ QUALITY OF LIFE

SOURCES: CARTER & HUGHES (2006); COPELAND ET AL. (2004); REYNOLDS & FISHER (2001)

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WHY RELATIONSHIPS MATTER... FOR THEIR PEERS

- ☐ DEVELOP NEW FRIENDSHIPS
- ☐ ENHANCED APPRECIATION OF DIVERSITY
- ☐ INCREASED AWARENESS OF DISABILITY ISSUES
- ☐ INCREASED ADVOCACY SKILLS—FUTURE CITIZENS
- ☐ PERSONAL GROWTH AND SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT
- ☐ GREATER SELF-ESTEEM
- ☐ HAVE FUN
- ☐ INTEREST IN PURSUING CAREERS IN THIS FIELD

SOURCES: COPELAND ET AL. (2004), FISHER (1999), KAMPS ET AL. (1998)

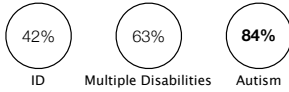
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Indicators of Friendships and Peer Relationships During Junior and Senior High in the US

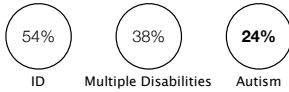
Frequently **see friends** outside of school:



Never or rarely **receive phone calls from friends**:



Get together with friends outside of formal groups at least once per week:



Source: Wagner, Cadwallader, Garza, & Cameto (2004)

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Relationships During Elementary School

Never **visited with friends** during the previous year:



Never or rarely **receive phone calls from friends**:



Invited to other children's social activities during the previous year:

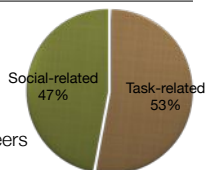


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Findings

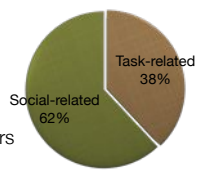
In core academic classes...

- No interactions during 23.5% of observations
- Interactions occurred with 2.1 different peers



In elective/related arts classes...

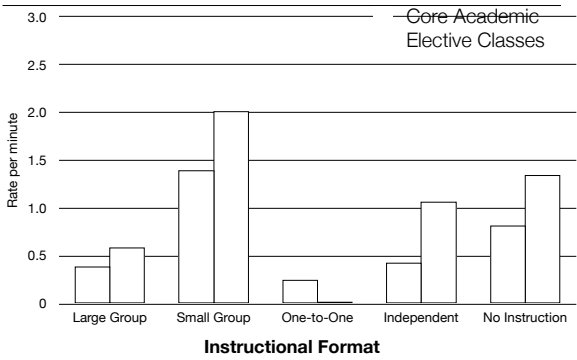
- No interactions during 27.4% of observations
- Interactions occurred with 1.9 different peers



Sources: Carter, Sisco, Brown, Brickham, & Al Khatib (2008)

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Does Instructional Format Make a Difference?



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A FEW THEMES...

- RELATIONSHIPS (AND RIGOR) REQUIRE SUPPORT AND INTENTIONALITY
- HOW MATTERS AS MUCH AS WHERE
- GOOD SUPPORT STRATEGIES REALLY SHOULD BE GOOD FOR EVERYONE

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Natural Supports Project | Peer Supports Project



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PROJECT PURPOSE

- 14+ MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS
 - 1-2 YEAR PROJECTS
 - ONE OR TWO SMALL INITIATIVES IN THEIR SCHOOLS
 - FOSTERING NATURAL SUPPORTS
- "...TO DISCOVER, SUPPORT, AND DISSEMINATE CREATIVE AND PROMISING APPROACHES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE MORE FULLY AND NATURALLY IN SCHOOL, WORK, AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES."

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WHAT ARE NATURAL SUPPORTS?

- ☐ _____
- ☐ RELATIONSHIPS
- ☐ INTERACTIONS
- ☐ ASSISTANCE
- ☐ CONNECTIONS
- ☐ RESOURCES

**ENHANCES
INCLUSION,
BELONGING,
CONTRIBUTIONS, &
QUALITY OF LIFE**

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WHO ARE NATURAL SUPPORTS?

- ☐ FRIENDS
- ☐ PEERS
- ☐ CLASSMATES
- ☐ TEAMMATES
- ☐ CLUB MEMBERS
- ☐ NEIGHBORS
- ☐ CO-WORKERS
- ☐ FAMILY MEMBERS
- ☐ ACQUAINTANCES
- ☐ CONGREGATIONS
- ☐ _____???
- ☐ MANY, MANY OTHERS

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USUAL VEHICLES OF SUPPORT

- ☐ SPECIAL EDUCATORS
- ☐ EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS
- ☐ JOB COACHES
- ☐ SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION
- ☐ SERVICE PROVIDERS
- ☐ "SPECIAL" FRIENDS

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OUR WORK WITH SCHOOLS

- ☐ MINI-GRANT COMPETITION
- ☐ SUMMER INSTITUTES OR SCHOOL WORKSHOPS (TEAMS OF STUDENTS/ADULTS)
- ☐ RESOURCES, SCHOOL VISITS, & ENCOURAGEMENT
- ☐ STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK AND OUTCOMES RESEARCH
- ☐ REPEAT!

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SOME LANDMARKS (OR IMPORTANT ELEMENTS)

- ☐ SHARED ACTIVITIES
- ☐ VALUED ROLES
- ☐ EQUIPPING STUDENTS AND OTHERS
- ☐ "JUST ENOUGH" SUPPORT
- ☐ REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

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I. SHARED ACTIVITIES

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THE REAL REASON YOUTH LOOK FORWARD TO SCHOOL

- ☐ NO WHERE ELSE HAS SO MANY KIDS TOGETHER IN THE SAME PLACE, AT THE SAME TIME, AND DOING THE SAME ACTIVITIES!



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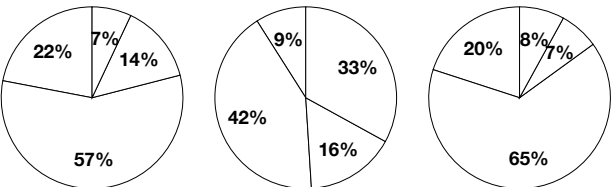
SHARED ACTIVITIES? SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ★ ARE STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES PRESENT IN THE **SAME SPACES**?
- ★ ARE STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES THERE AT THE **SAME TIMES**?
- ★ ARE STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES ENGAGED IN THE **SAME ACTIVITIES**?



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In the United States



Mostly General Education
Most Special Education

General and Special Education
Elsewhere

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MY CAFETERIA



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Activity: Reflecting
... On Your School

Settings	Same Time?	Shared Space?	Shared Activities?
Cafeteria			
Hallways/Lockers			
Academic Classes			
Elective Classes			
School Clubs			
Extracurriculars			
Field Trips			

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REFLECTING ON OUR
SCHOOLS

- WHAT ACTIVITIES TEND TO BE TRULY SHARED?
- WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE NOT SHARED?
- ARE STUDENTS WITH PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS MORE OFTEN LEFT OUT?
- WHAT CHANGES COULD BE MADE TO HAVE MORE SHARED ACTIVITIES?
- WHAT MIGHT BE YOUR FIRST STEP???

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2. ESTABLISHING VALUED ROLES

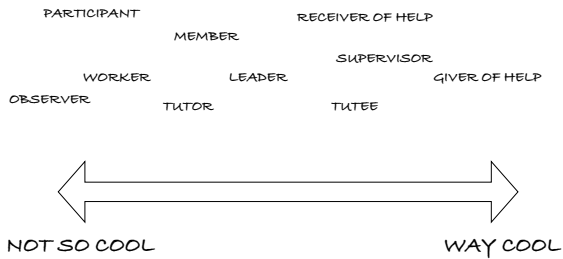
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VALUED ROLES? SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ★ WOULD THE TASKS DONE BY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES BE CONSIDERED "COOL AND DESIRABLE" BY THEIR PEERS?
- ★ ARE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES CONTRIBUTING IN WAYS THAT THEY CHOOSE FOR THEMSELVES?
- ★ ARE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES CONTRIBUTING IN DIFFERENT ROLES OVER TIME (VERSUS ASSUMING STATIC ROLES)?
- ★ DOES EVERYONE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BOTH GIVE AND RECEIVE SUPPORT?
- ★ WOULD SOMEONE ELSE NEED TO DO THE TASK IF A STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY WAS NOT DOING IT?

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ACTIVITY: THE COOLNESS *LINE UP*



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YOUR REFLECTIONS

- ☐ WHAT ROLES WERE SEEN AS LESS "COOL"?
- ☐ WHAT ROLES WERE SEEN AS MORE "COOL"?
- ☐ WHAT DOES THIS DEPEND ON?
- ☐ WHAT ROLES DO STUDENTS WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES TYPICALLY ASSUME?

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3. EQUIPPING STUDENTS (AND OTHERS)

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WHAT CAN HAPPEN **IFF?**

★ **I**NFORMATION

★ **F**ACILITATION

★ **F**ADING

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WHAT SHOULD STUDENTS
WITH AND WITHOUT
DISABILITIES KNOW TO BE
COMFORTABLE AND
CONFIDENT IN THEIR
RELATIONSHIPS?



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INFORMATION
(ABOUT EACH OTHER)

INFORMATION
(ABOUT EVENTS)

FACILITATION
(BY ADULTS)

FADING
(OF ADULT PRESENCE AND DIRECT SUPPORT)

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4. OFFERING "JUST ENOUGH" SUPPORT

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SOME NON-INDICATORS...

- ☐ WHEN TEACHERS ARE NAMED AS BEST FRIENDS
- ☐ WHEN TEACHERS ARE MISTAKEN FOR PARENTS BY PEERS
- ☐ WHEN PEERS USUALLY ASK QUESTIONS BY GOING THROUGH THE ADULT
- ☐ WHEN STUDENTS EAT LUNCH WITH ADULTS MORE OFTEN THAN WITH THEIR PEERS
- ☐ WHEN STUDENTS RIDE THE SCHOOL BUS WHILE EVERYONE ELSE CARPOOLS
- ☐ WHEN PEERS LOOK MORE LIKE MINI-TEACHERS THAN FRIENDS
- ☐ WHEN...

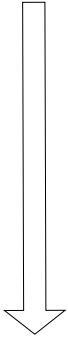
**YOU MIGHT BE
PROVIDING TOO
MUCH SUPPORT IF...**

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CAN A STUDENT DO IT..



- ☐ ON HIS OR HER OWN?
- ☐ IF GIVEN THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY OR ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT?
- ☐ IF GIVEN JUST A LITTLE INSTRUCTION?
- ☐ WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM A FRIEND OR PEER?
- ☐ WITH SOMEONE ELSE'S HELP IN THE SETTING?
- ☐ WITH OCCASIONAL HELP FROM A TEACHER OR OTHER STAFF?
- ☐ WITH CONSTANT HELP FROM A TEACHER OR OTHER STAFF?

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NAVIGATING ROADBLOCKS

<i>Anticipated Roadblocks</i>	<i>Strategies</i>




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5. REFLECTION,
EVALUATION, AND CELEBRATION

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REFLECT

-  GIVE YOURSELF CREDIT FOR WHAT WORKS!
-  LET GO OF WHAT DOES NOT WORK
-  REFER BACK TO YOUR LANDMARKS

SHARED ACTIVITIES
VALUED ROLES
EQUIPPING OTHERS
JUST ENOUGH SUPPORT
REFLECTION

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IN THE CLASSROOM

PEER SUPPORT STRATEGIES...

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Educational Assistants/Adults: The Usual Supports

- More than 408,000 educational assistants in the United States (in Canada...)
- One-to-one support in inclusive settings
- Increasingly requested by teachers and/or parents
- The “ticket” to inclusion?!?!

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Trends & Milestones

Edited by K. Charlie Lakin and David Braddock

Special Education Personnel Utilization and General Class Placement of Students with Disabilities: Ranges and Ratios

Michael F. Giangreco, Sean M. Hurley, and Jesse C. Suter

1.0

Nationally

?

Alberta

?

Your School

Number of educational assistant FTEs per special educator FTEs

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Reflecting on How We Provide Support

- What are the advantages of relying on adult-delivered supports?
- What are some of the potential drawbacks?
- What do the answers depend on...
 - Grade level?
 - School setting?
 - Student characteristics?

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Adults: The Usual Supports

Adults may inadvertently...

- Set students apart
- Limit students' social interactions with their classmates
- Decrease contact between students general education teachers or other group leaders
- Hinder student learning and achievement
- Encourage unnecessary dependence on adults--limit self-determination

www.uvm.edu/~cdci/evolve/

Source: Giangreco et al. (2004)

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2. SCREENING: Is our school overreliant on paraprofessionals or utilizing them inappropriately?

Purpose: This screening tool is designed to assist your team in determining whether your school is overreliant or inappropriately reliant on paraprofessionals. Directions: For each of the 16 examples below, put a check in the box to the right of the statement.

You know the:

1. ... the number of increased, in part, belief that one of students with disabilities is to assign

2. ... students with time in class period (e.g., excessively)

3. ... students with separated within side of room to

4. ... paraprofessionals are utilized to control some disabilities in the

5. ... students with primary instruction from paraprofessionals while special education do paperwork and manage the activities of paraprofessionals.

6. ... classroom teachers are indirectly or superficially involved with students with disabilities who are placed in their classes.

7. ... paraprofessionals make particular or instructional decisions or make adaptations without teacher or special educator oversight.

8. ... students with disabilities are highly and unnecessarily dependent on paraprofessionals.

You know there is a problem when...

9. ... paraprofessionals have more frequent communication and more developed working relationships with the parents of students with disabilities than teachers or special education do.

14. ... paraprofessionals provide academic support to students where they are under- or unskilled.

Happens Frequently/ Too Often	Happens Sometimes or Not Often	Happens Never or Rarely

School-Based Screening to Determine Overreliance on Paraprofessionals

Michael F. Giangreco and Stephen M. Broer

FOCUS ON AUTISM AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
VOLUME 22, NUMBER 3, FALL 2007
PAGES 149-158

www.uvm.edu/~cdci/evolve/

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Advantages of Peers

- Peers are “experts” on social skills
- Peers are not as “stigmatizing”
- Peers are great problem solvers
- Peers are future supports
- Peers benefit...
- Peers are readily available

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Peer Support Arrangements

- Facilitate student participation in class activities
- Provide frequent feedback and encouragement
- Model communication and other skills
- Promote interaction with other classmates
- Support progress related to Individual Program Plan (IPP) goals
- Support current behavior intervention plans, as appropriate

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Basic Steps...

- 1. Identifying students with disabilities who need assistance to participate in class activities;
- 2. Recruiting peers from within the same classroom to help provide some of these supports;
- 3. Arranging for students to sit next to each other during class activities;
- 4. Orienting peers to their roles, explaining the rationale for their involvement, and showing them basic strategies for supporting the academic and social participation of their classmate;
- 5. Providing ongoing monitoring, feedback, and assistance to peers and their partners throughout the semester, as needed; and,
- 6. Shifting educational assistants to a broader support role within the classroom through which they assist all students, as directed by the teacher

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Peer Support Strategies and Programs

[illegible]

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Educational Assistant/Special Educator Roles

- Classroom versus one-to-one support
- Modeling for peer supports how to interact and promote class participation
- Adapting the course curricula, assignments and projects (under guidance of special and general education teacher)
- Supervising and monitoring the peers to ensure that student with disabilities is fully participating
- Fading presence and direct support

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Evidence of Effectiveness

Findings from recent research studies...

Carter, Sisco, Melekoglu, and Kurkowski
Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation

Kennedy, Cushing, Carter, Clark, and colleagues
Project ACCESS (U.S. Department of Education)

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Participating Students and Classroom Settings

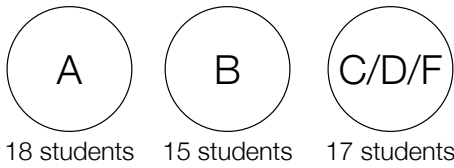
- 50 middle and high school students with intellectual disabilities or autism
- Enrolled in academic general education class
- 5 observations with educational assistants
- 5 observations with peer supports

Ecology
English
History
Language arts
Math

Science
Social studies
Spanish
Speech
World geography

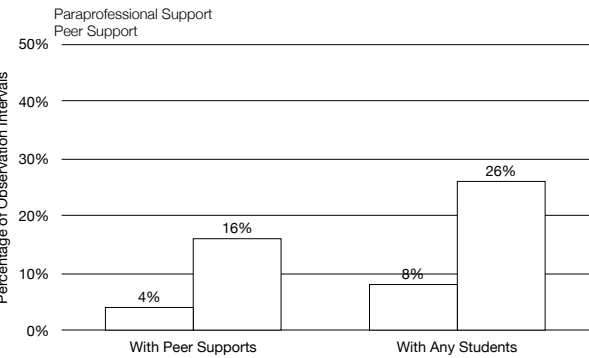
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Peers Who Are Providing Support



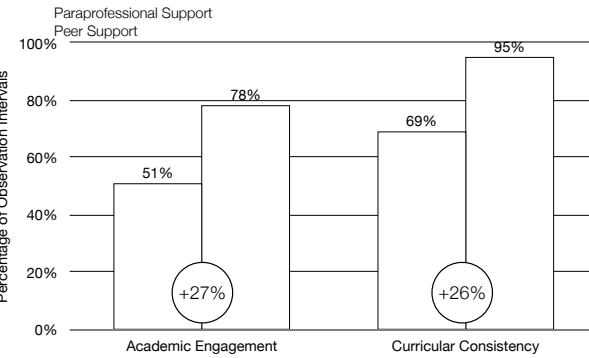
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How Do Peer Support Interventions Improve Students' **Social Interactions**?



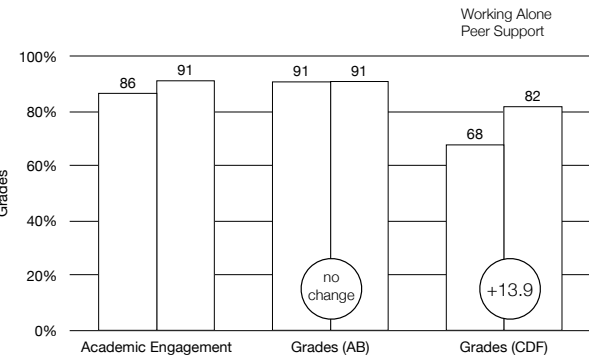
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How Do Peer Support Interventions Improve Students' **Academic Engagement** and **Alignment**?



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How Do Peer Supports Benefit?



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Some Illustrative Quotes

- **Peer Support**
"I'm still going to sit by her now that this is over. That was a surprise to me."
- **Paraprofessional**
"I always felt responsible, like I had to be there. And now I see I can walk away and that promotes interaction. I used to think people would think I wasn't doing my job if I wasn't right there. I view that differently now."
- **General Educator**
"It influenced my thinking of how I should be structuring interactions between students, and how I can encourage [the paraprofessional] to foster relationships between all kids."
- **Student with Disabilities**
"It's fun hanging with friends that you know. I don't like to sit with grown-ups all the time."

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Getting Started

Where do you begin?

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Implementing Peer Support Strategies

- 1.Planning for participation and supports
- 2.Recruiting peer supports
- 3.Equipping peers for their roles
- 4.Supporting students as they work together
- 5.Reflecting on the impact
- 6.Facilitating relationships beyond the classroom



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- What are the standards informing curricula, instruction, and assessment in this class?
- What are the expectations general educators hold for all students in this class?
- What IPP goals will the student work on in this class?
- How will the student be supported to participate in all of the learning and social opportunities in this class?

Examples of Supports...

- Walking with them from one class to the next
- Helping keep their assignments and class materials organized
- Reminding them how to follow established classroom routines
- Helping them to pass out class materials
- Encouraging interactions with other classmates
- Helping them check the accuracy of their assignments and class work
- Sharing notes or assisting them to take complete guided notes
- Paraphrasing lecture or rephrasing key concepts
- Prompting them to answer a question or contribute an idea during class discussion
- Helping clarify a key concept
- Helping them self-direct their own learning and self-manage their own behavior
- Writing down answers given orally or using a communication device
- Offering additional examples of a concept or ideas
- Demonstrating how to complete a problem
- Highlighting important information in the text or on a worksheet
- Reviewing concepts and content to ensure understanding
- Supporting involvement in cooperative group activities
- Teaching leisure and recreational activities during non-instructional times
- Helping them to "fit in" by learning accepted social norms
- Motivating and encouraging students when they get frustrated
- Prompting them to use their communication skills
- Exchanging advice related to a personal problem
- Sharing class materials
- Reading about a section of an assignment or textbook
- Redirecting them when they are off-task
- Inviting them to work together on a class project
- Showing them important classroom "survival" skills
- Reinforcing communication attempts
- Explaining how to do certain aspects of an assignment

IEP At-a-Glance and IEP Matrix

Student XXXXXXXXXX Date XXXX/XX/XX

Enter the child's daily schedule below:

Priority Goals

Enter targeted IEP goals below. Indicate time during the day that goal will be addressed by clicking the checkbox with your mouse, placing an "X" in the box by the schedule.

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Considerations in Selecting Peer Supports

- Ask the student...
- Similar ages
- Expressed interest
- Consistent attendance
- Shared interests
- Existing social networks
- Interpersonal skills and willingness to learn

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Identifying Peer Supports

Approaches	Advantages	Drawbacks
Student-identified peers		
Class announcements		
Teacher recommendations		
Circle of friends		
Rotating peer supports		
Universal peer supports		
Peers from other settings		

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Questions for Prospective Peer Supports

- How well do you already know _____?
- What interests you most about becoming a peer support?
- What expectations do you have?
- Why do you think it takes to be an effective peer support?
- Are there aspects of the experience you are worried about?
- What school and community activities are you involved in?
- What experiences have you had that you feel would make you a good peer support?
- What questions do you have about becoming a peer support?
- What do you hope to gain from this experience?
- Have you ever received support from your classmates? Describe the experience.

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Bucks Connect Club
Membership Application Form

Please complete and return this form to:

General Information

Name: _____

Gender: Male _____ Female _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Parent/Guardian Information

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Emergency Contact

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Please list any special medical conditions, allergies, or other health concerns.

Are you a member of the Bucks Connect Club?

Do you speak another language?

If yes, please explain: _____

(Type text)

Please list any sports or extracurricular activities you are involved in.

Fall: _____

Winter: _____

Spring: _____

Do you have a special request or need?

If yes, please explain: _____

Occasionally, some of our events have a fee. For this reason, please indicate if you are unable to pay.

Are you an insured driver?

Would you be able to drive?

Would you be willing to do this?

Have you had any experience with a peer support?

Why are you applying to be a peer support?

Please list any questions, concerns, or other information.

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

(Type text)

Disability Information: (if you have a disability)

Primary Disability: _____

Limitations (if any): _____

Medical Treatment Release:

The applicant described herein has permission to engage in all program activities except as noted. In an event that I cannot be reached in an emergency, I hereby give my permission to the physician selected by the program coordinator to hospitalize and receive proper treatment for my child as noted above. This form may be photocopied for use at events attended by the participant.

Media Release:

The Bucks Connect Club advisors and staff have my permission to use my child's photo, name, voice or words in television, newspapers, and other school-wide media in any form, for the purpose of advertising or communicating the progress and activities of the Bucks Connect Club.

PARENT SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

I hereby request membership in the Cinnings Valley Bucks Connect Club. I agree to abide by the district and club rules and policies. I agree to pay the cost of \$____ as an initiation fee, which will go toward club events and t-shirts.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

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3. Orienting Peers Without Disabilities to Their Roles

- 40-60 min orientation meeting
 - During lunch, before/after school, advisory, “down time”
 - Ongoing monitoring and support from paraprofessionals, special educators, and/or general educators
- Questions to Consider**

 - **Who** will lead the orientation session?
 - **When** and **where** will the session be held?
 - **What** topics will be addressed?
 - **Which** students will be encouraged to attend?

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Example Discussion Topics

- Introductions
- Rationale for peer-mediated strategies
- Background about the student
- General goals in the class, club, or other activity
- Confidentiality and respectful language
- Expectations specific to the classroom or elsewhere
- Technology and communication systems
- Promoting class participation
- Student motivation and feedback
- When to seek assistance
- Discussion and questions

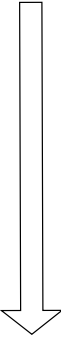
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4. Supporting Students as They Work Together

- How will the team communicate about future lessons?
- Who will adapt materials?
- Who will train and give feedback to the peer supports and partners?
- Who will collect data on IEP goals?
- Who will model support strategies?
- What is the plan for dealing with inappropriate behavior of the peer supports or the student with disabilities?

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Can The Student Do It..

- 
- ☐ On his or her own?
 - ☐ If given the right technology or adaptive equipment?
 - ☐ If given just a little instruction?
 - ☐ With a little help from a friend or peer?
 - ☐ With someone else's help in the setting?
 - ☐ With *occasional* help from a teacher or other staff?
 - ☐ With *continuous* help from a teacher or other staff?

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Facilitation Strategies

- Modeling ways for students to initiate, maintain, and extend conversations
- Demonstrating how to converse with someone using an augmentative or alternative communication devices
- Highlighting shared interests, strengths, experiences, or other similarities among students
- Teaching and prompting critical social interaction skills (e.g., greeting classmates, requesting help, refusing support)
- Redirecting peers’ questions and comments away from the adult and to the student with disabilities (and vice versa)

Facilitation Strategies (continued)

- Interpreting the communicative intent of particular behaviors, as well as suggesting appropriate responses
- Highlighting students’ strengths and contributions to small-group and other projects
- Assigning classroom responsibilities requiring frequent interaction, such as small-group assignments and cooperative projects
- Ensuring students sit together and remain in close physical and social proximity
- Asking specific peers to provide particular support


Sources: Cauton-Theoharis & Malmgren, 2005; Downing, 2005; Ghem, York-Bar, & Sommerens, 2002

A Couple of Great Articles to Share with EAs

Universal Design for Learning & Differentiated Instruction

The Golden Rule of Providing Support in Inclusive Classrooms: Support Others as You Would Wish to Be Supported

John N. Cauton-Theoharis



Paraeducators’ Roles in Facilitating Friendships Between Secondary Students With and Without Autism Spectrum Disorders or Developmental Disabilities

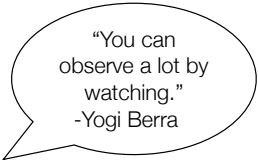
Kathleen A. Bennett and Deborah P. Saxton

Abstract: This article discusses the roles of paraeducators in facilitating friendships between secondary students with and without autism spectrum disorders or developmental disabilities. The authors review research on the importance of social skills training and the role of paraeducators in providing support and modeling appropriate social interactions. The article also discusses the importance of creating a supportive classroom environment and the role of paraeducators in promoting positive social relationships between students.

5. Reflecting on the Impact of Peer Supports

Classroom Observations

- Nature of students interactions with peers
- Types of conversational skills
- Modes of communication
- Persons involved in interactions
- Time in which students are engaged academically
- Time in which students work on activities aligned with the general curriculum
- Time in which students are working with a one-to-one adult support



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Conversations with Students with Disabilities

- Are you enjoying spending time with ____? Why or why not?
- What are some of the things you do together?
- What help do you find most helpful? Least helpful?
- What have you learned from working with ____?
- Do you consider ____ to be a friend?
- Would you like to continue working with ____? Why or why not?

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Conversations with Peers Providing Support

- How would you describe your experiences?
- Did you enjoy serving in this role? In what ways?
- What things have been going really well? Not so well?
- In what ways have you benefited from this involvement?
- What changes have you noticed in your partner, if any?
- Has this been a beneficial experience for your partner?
- What additional help would you like to be effective in this role?

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Conversations with Educators and Paraprofessionals

- What is your overall impression of peer support strategies?
- How would you describe the experiences of students?
- How effective have peers been at providing support?
- What strategies do these peers still need to learn?
- What concerns (if any) do you still have?
- What sort of assistance would be most helpful for you?
- What have been the benefits to students with disabilities? To their peer partners? To other students? To school staff?

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Conversations with Parents

- What does your child tell you about working with his or her peers in this classroom?
- What have you noticed that suggests your child is enjoying this experience?
- Does your child describe his or her peers as friends?
- Is your child connecting with his peers outside of school, by phone, e-mail, or in person?

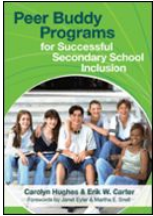
6. Facilitating Interactions Beyond the Classroom

Natural relationships and supports	Friendship groups and supportive relationships programs	Goal-setting and problem-solving groups
Buddy systems Informal peer interactions Extracurricular and recreational activities	Partners at Lunch Club "Yes I Can" Program Best Buddies Peer facilitators Peer buddy program	Peer planning Circles of Friends MAPS PATH Personal futures planning

Source: Janney & Snell (2006)

Basic Steps

- 1.Laying the Groundwork
- 2.Identifying Students
- 3.Equipping Students to Support and Spend Time with Each Other
- 4.Connecting at Regular Meetings or Events
- 5.Sustaining and Expanding the Program



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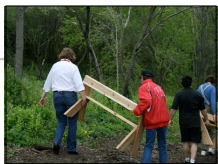


EXTRACURRICULAR
(AND OTHER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES)

- ☐ FORMED CLUBS
- ☐ TOOK FIELD TRIPS



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- ☐ DEVELOPED A PARK
- ☐ DESIGNED SCHOOL-WIDE DISABILITY AWARENESS ACTIVITIES



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- ☐ OPENED A SCHOOL STORE
- ☐ TEAM BUILDING



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- ☐ CREATED PARTNERSHIPS WITH AREA TECHNICAL SCHOOL
- ☐ FOCUSED ON EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT



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- ☐ PRESENTED IDEAS TO THE COMMUNITY (SCHOOL BOARD, BUSINESS COMMUNITY)
- ☐ COMMUNITY SERVICE

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GETTING STARTED

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10 ways to... HOLD A KICK-OFF EVENT

- ☐ YOUTH PANEL
- ☐ PIZZA PARTY
- ☐ PANCAKE BREAKFAST
- ☐ MEET AND GREET
- ☐ VIDEO SCREENING
- ☐ FIELD TRIP
- ☐ BOOTH AT ORIENTATION
- ☐ FLOAT IN HOMECOMING PARADE

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10 ways to... RECRUIT STUDENTS

- ☐ ASK THEM!
- ☐ MAKE IT FUN
- ☐ OFFER FOOD
- ☐ KEEP ASKING...
- ☐ GIVE STUDENTS INFORMATION
- ☐ TELL OTHER TEACHERS
- ☐ INVITE A FRIEND
- ☐ BE COOL (OR FIND AN ADULT WHO IS)
- ☐ OFFER CREDIT/ VOLUNTEER HOURS
- ☐ ...

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10 ways to... MAINTAIN A CLUB

- ☐ MEET REGULARLY
- ☐ TRY SOMETHING NEW
- ☐ USE E-MAIL/FACEBOOK
- ☐ KEEP IT FUN
- ☐ ROTATE YOUTH LEADERSHIP
- ☐ HAVE SEMESTER/YEARLY KICK OFF EVENTS
- ☐ RECRUIT NEW STUDENTS
- ☐ DOCUMENT ACTIVITIES (PHOTOS, VIDEO, STORIES)
- ☐ MANAGE LOGISTICS
- ☐ ENGAGE IN TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES

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STUDENT-LED INITIATIVES



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A Few Themes Across Our Projects...

- ☒ **Relationships** matter
- ☒ **Relationships and rigor** require support
- ☒ **How** matters as much as **where**
- ☒ Good support strategies should be good for **everyone**
- ☒ Doing things **differently** doesn't always require more resources
- ☒ Strategies should be effective **and** feasible



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